development of Khadi industry. Khadi loans are provided interest-free by KVIC and at four per cent by banks under interest subsidy scheme of KVIC. The patterns include capital expenditure provision for workshed and equipments and working capital provision covering all aspects right from purchase of raw material to selling of finished products. KVIC extends liberalised pattern of assistance applicable to hill border/tribal and weaker section to institutions having hundred percent SC/ST and for those institutions exclusively working for SC/STs. In respect of all-women organisations also certain promotional grants are provided. KVIC also provides grants for marketing, publicity, exhibition etc. of khadi products.

(b) KVIC has introduced several types of improved charkhas in the field. The charkhas currently being supplied are 6-spindle high speed new model metal charkha, 12-spindle charkha, 10-spindle coarse spinning charkha and pot charkha for coarse count spinning. These equipments are meant for cotton spinning. In respect of woollen khadi, 4-spindle worsted type New Model Charkhas are being introduced besides Bageshwari charkhas. In respect of silk khadi, improved reeling basins are being introduced, KVIC is also assigning spinners using available traditional charkhas by encouraging their production. Since Khadi is an institutional programme, the total assistance flows to the umbrella institutions, which render all escort services to the spinning and weaving artisans.

(c) Yes Sir. KVIC is considering to introduce Power-operated 24 to 48 spindle charkhas under Lok Vastra Scheme for which experiments to assess the economic viability and technical feasibility have been taken up.

Minimum wages for handloom weavers

748. SHRI PRAGADA KOTAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that minimum wages have not been fixed under the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act for handloom weavers engaged in production of Khadi-cloth with hand spun yarn;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to fix minimum wages to handloom weavers employed in the production of Khadi under the Khadi Commission on its certified centres?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. J. KURIEN): (a) to (c) Khadi and Village Industries Commission has prescribed a system of wages on piece rate basis (Productivity linked) for adoption by Khadi insittutions and Departmental units producing khadi. The artisans including wavers employed in khadi activities are essentially self-employed. The earnings however differ from activity to activity depending upon quantum of output, nautre and quality of work, hours of work, nature of technology input etc. The rates of wages are strictly according to the prescribed Cost Chart. This cost chart is reviewed from time to time and the remunerations given to the artisans revised as and when necessary to pay suitable remunerations to them consistent with the economic viabilty of the product and its saleability.

Setting up of automobile project by Ford Motors of U.S.A.

749. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ford Motors of USA have been exploring the possibility of setting up an automobile project in the country either with Government or private collaboration;

(b) if so, whether any negotiations have been made in this regard; and

(c) if so, what is the present position in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. J. KURIEN): (a) to (c) The only proposal whirh was received and cleared